

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 240.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 7, 1858.

Price 1½d.

FEATHERED MINNESINGERS.

THERE are two things for which I have a passion—wild-birds and wild-flowers; by which avowal let me not be understood to mean that I am insensible to the delicious aroma of conservatories, or the gorgeous bloom of parterres; much less that I have any rooted affection for the harpy-eagle, or entertain a special predilection for the serpent-eater. But I fear I must confess that I prefer a harebell to a cactus, and speedwell and forget-me-not to calceolarias; and no rajah lory or scarlet macaw need attempt to make up to me for the little wildlings that, 'whether heard or not,' sing by myriads in the hedgerows, hiding in the scented clumps of the milky hawthorn, or shaking free its ruddy berries from the new-fallen snow. Since the days when I gravely followed sparrows in my pinafore, with a handful of salt, the victim of an infamous nursery fraud relative to a caudal application thereof, I have been a devout bird-worshipper, loving with my whole heart, though perfectly innocent of scientific mysteries. My ornithological conclusions at that time, however, were chiefly derived from the curious antediluvian specimens indigenous to a Noah's Ark, and the sparrow-stalking alluded to took place in one of those small mural enclosures which go in cities by the name of gardens.

The dove was my undoubted favourite, secretly, I believe, owing to its prerogative of olive-branch; and after this, my affections wavered between two chrome-yellow canaries and a very remarkable pure scarlet species—name unknown. There was no robin that at all came up to my preconceived ideas, formed upon the dear old ballad that has immortalised the bonny bird—no modern version, plastered with prosy incident, or hammered out into smooth and polished rhymes, till its pathos and its raciness are lost, but the real lilting lines that are so inexpressibly sweet and touching. Children who have read the original, scoff at *Babes in the Wood* in prose. I suppose I may have been six years old, and the book has long been dust; but do I not remember the thin octavo, precious as an Elzevir, with its limp, shining cover of paly green, and leaves of burnished satin; the clear type, speaking from the glossy page; the soft wood-cuts, infrequent, perhaps, but each one honoured with a separate leaf, and its own excerpted legend, and carefully protected from the ravages of the unwary by a dainty film of pink paper! We are not so prodigal of margin and letter-press now.

The *Death and Burial of Cock Robin*, a legend of a very different stamp, unveiled new marvels of birdlore, infusing martial ardour by the very abruptness

of its initial question and answer, and the haught apparitions of the audacious criminal, bow and arrow in hand, on the title-page. The catechetical plan of this startling drama is highly original, and the excited spectator is introduced to a wide field of ornithological inquiry, not to mention the edifying episodes of the fish and the beetle, and the rather anomalous introduction of the bull as bell-ringer. How the fish obtained possession of that most terrene-looking dish, used to be to me a serious mystery, rousing painful misgivings as to the individual honesty of the benevolent blood-catcher, and involving deep speculations on the subject of fish-potteries and their possible connection with potted fish. The beetle's undertaking capacities were more admissible; but I always considered the owl's feat of sextonship as the *ne plus ultra* of legerdemain. Why the lark so strenuously insisted on the obsequies taking place by daylight, I never could understand, since she made it a point of honour that she was to carry a torch on the occasion; but I rather contemptuously concluded that she must have been afraid of ghosts, and suffered the matter to drop. Of course, I had not the remotest suspicion of any base, underhand doings between rhyme and reason. But all honour to these good old nursery classics! I would give a whole wagon-load of modern importations for *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Cinderella*, *Cock Robin*, and the *History of an Apple-pie*—which last, by the way, forms the most admirable system of baby mnemonics, and whose most illogical sequences I now gratefully acknowledge, for they taught me the alphabet.

'One swallow does not make a summer,' says the ancient adage; and yet when we see the beautiful darting creature careering swiftly in the pale April skies, we are apt to ignore the wary old saw, though the hedges are sprouting very timidly, and the morning primroses are still cold with frost, and the hoary dew lies white upon the dead beech-leaves till the sun is hot, and hardly a tree but the larch and the sycamore is green, and the snow-clouds are perhaps hovering ominously upon the sky-line. We cannot, it is true, take up the full burden of the quaint old English song—

Summer is yemen in,
Loud sing cucku;
Groweth seed, and bloweth mead,
And springeth the weed new;

but there rise to our lips the words of a yet older refrain, that 'the winter is past, and the time of the singing of birds is come.' We must, indeed, make up our minds to wait for the halcyon days when the life of the little lovers is nothing but a gush of song;

when, from dawn to twilight, the ear vainly listens for a break or a hush in the 'fast thick warble;' but even now, many a winged minnesinger is piping music by snatches; and the faithful triad of voices that cheered the long, lonely winter, is already merged in a fuller chorus: the brave sweet robin, the daisy of birds; the little wren, chirping softly by her 'ain fireside,' as she looked out at the drifting snow; and the stormcock, or missel-thrush, whose cheery whistle was heard among the loud bleak winds that swept howling through the rowan-trees, and stripped the branches of their scarlet fruit.

The robin and the wren are among the sacred birds of England. This is the odd chant current among the peasantry of Warwickshire, who make their children learn it with all reverence:

The robin and the wren
Are God Almighty's cock and hen;
The martin and the swallow
Are God Almighty's bow and arrow.

This feeling with regard to the redbreast is perhaps connected with the pretty legend—one of those harmless and suggestive superstitions which extend to certain of the dumb creation an indirect interest in the higher mysteries of the universe; and which, scattered among the more questionable traditions of the Romish Church, certainly tended to humanise the masses, by bringing all things that had life within the limit of a catholic blessing, and casting over the birds and the flowers the beautiful shadow of Christianity. As in the German myth of the crossbill, a place is claimed for the robin among the Josephs and the Magdalenes, who were not contented with standing 'afar off' the day that the sun was darkened. It is said the fearless little mourner flew straight against the heart that had just been pierced by the soldier's spear, and was bidden to wear his ruddy plumes for ever.

Of course, robin is a favourite with the poets. Thomson draws him tapping at the frosty window, and boldly picking up his morning crumbs; Keats hears him 'whistling from a garden croft,' when the swallows are gathering in the autumn skies; Gray's robin 'builds and warbles' among the churchyard violets; Wordsworth's chases the crimson butterfly; Collins pictures him still at his legendary toil, heaping up moss and flowers in the warm summer evenings; and Cowper, wandering through the silent, leafless woods, hears no sound among the powdery trees except the loosened icicle that drops in the winter noon into the rustling leaves at his feet, and the short, broken song of the robin, perched in a gleam of frosty sunshine among the rimy branches. The affectionate and confiding nature of this little bird wins him a way everywhere. He is capable of strong personal attachment; and one of his most winning attributes is a strange *rapprochement*, which he has not seldom evinced towards the sick and the infirm. Wordsworth has a pretty sonnet to a wild redbreast that pecked confidingly from his lips in Rydal woods; and he tells of another which took up his nightly abode in the chamber of one entirely confined to a sick-bed. Roosting there upon a picture-nail, he constituted himself the delegate of the countless warblers from whose songs she was shut out; and his cheery matins broke forth with the returning dawn, sweet and clear as if he was nestled beneath the stars in the whispering greenwood. We knew a robin which displayed a similar instinct, emboldened, it would seem, by the presence of sickness; and which in the fresh summer mornings would enter unbidden at the open window, take his welcome for granted, fly without the smallest fear upon the bed, and take his breakfast under the very eye of the invalid. The robin builds a neat and unpretending nest, rather

brown than green, and generally contrived so as to elude observation. An anecdote is preserved of one who made a little autumn eyry in the shrouds of the war-ship which was building at Chatham to commemorate the victory of Trafalgar. The work was suffered to proceed unmolested, and the little patriot actually laid the first of six eggs on the 21st of October, the anniversary of the battle—quite unmoved by the presence of the hundred guns, whose sleeping thunder was destined to waken across the sea the name of England and the memory of Nelson.

But 'the wren, the wren, the king of all birds,' bears off the palm in nest-making. Fabulists say that she alone of the whole feathered race had patience to conclude her studies in architecture; and she certainly presents the most finished specimen of patience and perseverance. The tiny moss-house, roofed over from the rain, appears hardly large enough to accommodate the diminutive owner; yet it affords a cradle to near a score of wrenlets; and as during the leafy summer the wren alone can fulfil literally the pretty line of the American poet,

The little bird sits at his door in the sun;

so in the darker days, when the infant brood is fledged, and the leaves are blown from the shivering boughs, the parent bird returns with faithful love to its summer home, and, hidden in its mossy porch, flings out its music, a viewless minstrel, to the wintry winds.

Nor is the wren without his proper legends. Both in Ireland and in Germany, the story goes how he crept unperceived on to the outstretched wings of the eagle, when the birds were flying high for a kingdom; how he was borne aloft by an impetus quite independent of his own volition; and how the astute little politician was thus enabled to outsoar his magnificent rival, and had the crown-royal set upon his head by the universal suffrage of the over-reached spectators. Paddy, however, has private reasons of his own for paying homage to his little majesty, who is said, during the commotions of one of the civil wars, to have awakened a sleeping sentinel by tapping thrice with his beak upon an adjacent drum, and by this timely admonition, to have saved a party of royalists from impending destruction. The Munster boys still drink to his health and happiness on St Stephen's Day, and think him worthy of being ranked with the geese of the Capitol: and so he is.

But the gem of our British birds is the regulus, or golden-crested wren. This fairy 'kinglet'—as he is sometimes called—is not more than three inches long in his feathers: but this is only the full-dress standard; for those who have studied him in *puris naturalibus*, aver that his actual longitude is somewhere about an inch. He flits with his tiny queen among the great oaks and elms, like an autumn leaf, or a swallow-tailed butterfly; and here, with a slender cordage of moss and down, they sling their nest, something in sailor-fashion, from a bough, and bring out a numerous progeny of crested atoms—more like bees than birds—to swing in turn upon the swaying branches, and creep among the sunny leaves.

Lower down, upon the same tree, fixed, perhaps, in some young bough that has sprouted from a bole in the elm, or hidden in the brier-rose that is twining round the roots of the oak, is the beautiful nest of the chaffinch. No one who has not seen a spink's nest, knows what a bird can do. The delicate cup, crusted with lichens, might have been turned on a potter's wheel. It resembles an exquisite bowl of frosted silver, within which lie the fawn-coloured eggs, flecked with irregular purple stains. The chaffinch, like the West Indian humming-bird, makes use of the cobweb in its architecture; for it is with the silken thread of the spider that it stitches the mossy thatch to its fibrous walls. It commonly shuns the larger forest trees,

and chooses a box, a juniper, or an apple-tree in the garden, a furze-bush or a bramble by the roadside, to shelter the callow nestlings that come blind and helpless from the shell. This bird does not sing in winter, for its voice breaks entirely, and nothing is left of its summer melody but a shrill cry of terror or defiance. Yet it does not leave its familiar haunts; and its well-known form may still be seen, with wings of ashy blue, and a breast paler than the robin's, as it detects with quick and sparkling eye a worm or a barley-corn in the brown stubble-field; or roots out with its azure bill the soft golden heart of the scarlet dog-hip. In Thuringia, that ancient home of the troubadours, the chaffinch is so highly esteemed, that a large price may be obtained for one by those who make merchandise of the 'feathered minnesingers;' but in some of the continental countries, this lovely little bird is the victim of a barbarism so cruel and dastardly as almost to exceed belief. With the avowed purpose of improving the wild forest music that it has of nature's gift, its hazel eyes are burned and seared away with red-hot iron, and it is condemned to beat its pretty wings for ever in a wooden cage some few inches square. Here, in its blind and hopeless captivity, it sings, and sings, as if it was mad with joy; its wild glad music bursting in piteous frenzy up the warm sunbeams that creep through the grating of its narrow prison, past the mute, merciful sky, till it rings in the ears of Him who, amid the loud harpings of heaven, hears the young ravens cry; and who, throned among worshipping angels, numbers the sparrows as they fall.

Honourable mention must be made of the goldfinch, the most beautiful of all the *Fringillidae*, and called, from the perfect finish of its small but exquisite nest, the 'Arachne of the grove.' This gentle and lady-like bird is extremely sociable in its disposition, ready not only to be at peace with all the world, but even to attach itself to a cage-life with happy docility. It has not the slightest objection to practise under a singing-master, and can soon be taught to echo in its soft flute-like tones the louder strains of a professional wood-lark or canary. But fascinating as the little creature may be in his civilised state, go with old Chaucer into the Saxon fairland; and with feet crushing the glittering dew, seek him out among the broad branches of the hushed, sunshiny trees, the charm, the silence, the freshness of that golden summer morning, which, caught by a sunbeam, lives for ever in that ancient heliograph, *The Floure and the Leaf*:

And as I stode, and cast aside mine eye,
I was ware of the fairist medler tre
That ever yet in all my life I se,
As full of blossomis as it might be;
Therein a goldfinch leping prettily,
Fro bough to bough, and, as him list, he ete
Here and there of buddis and flouris swete.

And at the last the bird began to sing
(When he had eten what he eten wold),
So passing swetely, that, by many fold,
It was more pleasaunt than I couthe devise.

And again, at evening:

The goldfinch, eke, that fro the medler tre
Was fled, for hete, unto the bushis cold,
Unto the lady of the flouris gan fle,
And on hir hond he set him, as he wold,
And pleasauntly his wingis gan to fold.

The bullfinch, a native of England, but much more common in Germany, is quite as fond of 'buddis and flouris' as the hero of the medlar-tree. He is, moreover, quite as amenable, much more sagacious, and will readily exchange his wild-wood warble for human

ditties, which he learns to whistle with a sweetness and correctness truly astonishing. The little tricks and devices to which he can be trained add to the attractions of the piping bullfinch. He is likewise capable of the most ardent personal attachment, and the most violent hatred, is easily ruled by his affections, and is possessed of a memory wonderfully acute and retentive. The following passages are from the life of a pet bullfinch, now departed, who, if he had been born a Douglas, might have carved upon his scutcheon, 'Tender and true.' He had conceived, from the first, a passionate and instinctive affection for his master, which he evinced on all occasions by the most winning ways, and tokens the most intelligent and unmistakable. A soft whistle from the well-known voice would bring him fluttering to the side of his cage, where he would lay his little velvety head against the brazen wires, rubbing it caressingly on his master's cheek, pecking food from his lips with his bright ebony beak, and sending forth the whole time, from his rosy breast, a low chirrup of deep joy. His rooted antipathy to another member of the family was equally striking; and as there was no ostensible ground for Bully's determined hostility, every endeavour was made to arrive at an understanding; but both emotions stood the test of flattery, cajolement, and coercion. In vain the enemy assumed friendly tactics, made humiliating advances, offered ambrosial sugar, and strove to undermine the citadel of honour by a nefarious system of sapping and mining, and then to take the fortress by storm. 'Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified, his loyalty he kept;' and not only never wavered in his allegiance, but refused to avert, by the most equivocal token, the rising choler of the foe. At last, during the absence of his owner, by a most unjustifiable travesty of that ancient fraud by which Jacob imposed himself upon his blind father, the little hero was cheated into a momentary acceptance of the hostile advances. Arrayed in stolen raiment, his features hidden by a large green shade—the well-known signal of the beloved presence—the wily masker softly approached his face to the bars; and after enjoying for a few moments the wicked satisfaction of the fond twitter of recognition that was meant for another, suddenly withdrew the visor, and revealed his identity to the deluded little Isaac, who nearly broke his heart upon the spot with wild and bitter rage. But Bully was to have his triumph. It was not till a full month had elapsed that the absentee returned, and then without any previous intimation; so that nothing could possibly have transpired to awaken the expectation of the sagacious little bird. He had betaken himself to bed as usual, at sunset, after the manner of all well-ordered 'foulis,' and was roosting peacefully when the parlour clock chimed ten, with his little black night-cap under his wing. Suddenly the outer bell rang; and roused by the sound, the creature started on his perch, and began to move his head from side to side with an uncertain and attentive gesture, which quickly became impatient and eager. Every moment increased his flutter; his feathers were ruffled, his eyes danced, each motion bespoke expectation. A step sounded at the door; he became more and more excited, and began to cheep and whistle. The little faithful thing was not deceived; and when his anticipations were realised, and his master actually entered the room, he shook his pretty wings, struggled against the bars, and poured forth such a flood of joy and welcome as Blondel rang from his minstrel harp when he found his minnesinger king. Alas for the gallant little hero! Not long after, a hateful cat, ripe for blood and murder, made her way to his defenceless prison; and dashing himself in his wild terror against the wires, her cruel claws choked out his innocent life. It is a pitiful consolation

to add, that his tiny corpse was rescued unprofaned from the clutches of the destroyer.

Let us hasten away from these poor little unfortunates, out into the free blue air, where the sky is filled with the warble of swallows, and God's sunlight flashes on their blue glossy wings; where the swifts wheel onwards and upwards for ever; when the house-swallow caters, open-mouthed, for her young; and the marten hangs with clinging feet to its nest on the face of the sea-cliff, and the bank-swallows creep into their sandy burrows. Surely there was never a captive swallow; for over this beautiful bird there rests an almost universal agis, a feeling of veneration something akin to that which is so magically woven into the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Nor can we wonder at the innocent superstition that hallows the 'prophet of the year.' All glad instincts are awakened by the reappearance of the little Ariel who is chasing spring for ever round the world, himself the living sapphire that girdles earth with flowers. Only the lightning itself is more rapid than that darting wing, which fascinates the eye by its wonderful grace and velocity, as it wheels its ceaseless and untiring flight from the deep sunrise, when it bathes in the dewy purple which is the home of the morning-star, till the last golden tinge has faded and rippled from the edge of the western sky, and it is sheathed in the trembling silver of night. One of Shelley's most exquisite stanzas to the skylark would apply with even greater felicity to the swallow:

Up the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run,
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

Has anybody ever seen a Pre-Raphaelite swallow? Would Mr Millais ask this one to sit for its picture in the sun? We hope not. What sort of a hybrid, compound reflecting micro-telescope does he use in drawing his perspectives? But get the little 'winged seraph' for one moment into your hands, and observe how passingly beautiful he is. Stroke the sheeny purple of his slender wings, note the soft scarlet of his sobbing throat, feel the warm panting of his snowy breast, meet the quick terror of his pleading eye, and then let the 'musical cherub' away. You will from henceforth be able to form your own conclusions on the pros and cons, the spirit and the letter, to put your own sense, comment, and interpretation on the literal, grammatical, possible, and intrinsic philosophy of at least one old English proverb: 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.'

For house-sparrows, it must be owned, we have no especial favour. They are greedy, and noisy, and impudent—lazy withal, when it serves their purpose. Still, as we have no desire to lay ourselves open to the charge of partiality, we must acknowledge that if the sparrow is a thief, so, if all tales be true, revenge is bound up in the heart of a swallow. We will, however, state the case, without pre-judging either party. It is said that a newly married pair of sparrows, thinking it would be more eligible and economical to occupy a furnished residence than to build one, provided they could sit rent-free, established themselves very comfortably and unceremoniously in the last year's nest of a couple of respectable, elderly swallows, which had not yet returned from the continent. The owners, on arriving at home, found their desirable family mansion taken by the intruders; but, apparently satisfied that possession was nine points of the law, they gracefully waived the tenth, and retreated before the reigning power. But while the sparrows were laughing in their sleeves at the discomfiture of the houseless pair, the swallows were laying deep and deadly plans of

vengeance. Days passed on. The little matron sobered down as she brooded over her eggs, and her mate watched with proud importance for the arrows that were to fill his quiver. At last the young birds chipped the shell, and of course there was immediate hunger in the camp. The father of the family departed to procure the initiatory breakfast; and the swallows, I am sorry to say, chose this interesting moment for their *coup de main*. Flying pell-mell to their desecrated habitation, they gave the poor little mother to understand that the hour and the man had both come, and having the necessary bricklaying apparatus close at hand, they walled her up with her hapless brood as sternly as if they had been monks of the middle ages.

The monks, however, if their own credentials are to be taken for gospel, kept their swallows in better order. The swallows were mild and gentle under the régime of Holy Church. St Francis of Paula, according to the *Golden Legend*, was quite a bird-tamer. 'A bird sat singing on a fig-tree by the side of his cell. He called it to him; the bird came upon his hand, and he said to it: "Sing, my sister, and praise the Lord;" and the bird sat singing till he gave it liberty to go away. Going to Venice with his companions, and hearing birds singing in a wood, he proposed to sing the canonical hours, but the monks could not hear themselves for the chanters of the grove, wherefore he entreated the feathered choir to be silent, and they remained so till he gave them liberty to proceed. At another place when he was preaching, he could not be heard for the swallows which were building their nests: he said to them: "Sister swallows, it is time for me to speak; as you've said enough, be quiet." And so they were.'

We might go on and on for ever; it would still be a story without an end. We might tell of the gentle hedge-sparrow, which sings so sweetly in the first days of spring, when the mornings are still frosty, and a bird's voice rings on the air like a bell. Before the thorn is green enough to hide its early nest, we might look into the leafless hedge for the blue eggs that lie gleaming there like jewels, and not so safe, alas! as Alfred's golden bracelets. We might stand by the glossy laurel to listen to the merle's morning-hymn, and hear the mavis answer him from the orchard, and the skylark, as she drops into her nest. We might dive into a hollow tree for the eggs of the blue titmouse, that beautiful and mischievous little vixen, who will bite if she is at home, but who is probably creating a panic at the bee-hive, by tapping mysteriously at the door, and eating the bees when they come to see what is the matter. We might pass on to the great dark moor, where the morning mist still hangs like a veil of steam, and hear the good domestic linnets singing by hundreds in the sweet yellow gorse. We might pause in the deeps of the forest, to listen to the dim voice of the stock-dove, among the sweet breath of pines, and the floating leaves, in the still presence of autumn. We might steal into some grassy dell when the cowslips are asleep, and watch for the nightingale's midnight hymn.

But before taking leave of our feathered minnesingers, one word must be given to the pleasant memory of that good troubadour, Walter of the Birdmeadow, whose dying bequest to his fellow-minstrels is the theme of one of those quaint and pretty ballads in the poet Longfellow excels. Walther von der Vogelweide was a minnesinger from his cradle. He lost his first patron, the son of the Emperor Leopold, in Cœur de Lion's crusade, when he was but a child of seven; and from that time forward his life was that of a wanderer. He said he had learned his songs of the birds; and he bore one for a device upon his shield. His lays were generally

of a grave and gentle cast, and his name calls up the shades of birds and flowers. After a pure and peaceful life, he was laid to rest in the cloister of Würzburg Cathedral. In gratitude to the singing-birds, which he always regarded as his teachers, he left in his last will an order that they should be fed daily at noon by the chorister-boys, beneath the tree which shadowed his tomb. A niggardly abbot at last, it would seem, mulcted the pretty pensioners of their dole; the 'Deus istius miserere' has crumbled away with the rest of the monkish epitaph; and the children of the choir no longer know the spot where the voice of the minnesinger sleeps.

But around the vast cathedral,
By sweet echoes multiplied,
Still the birds repeat the legend,
And the name of Vogelweide.

HALF AN HOUR WITH A FIGHTING-MAN.

SOME two months ago, I was walking up and down the Lime Street station at Liverpool, in company with a friend, awaiting the departure of the evening mail, by which we were returning home. As it wanted but a few minutes to the time, we selected a compartment in a second-class carriage; but before we could enter, we had to wait some little time to allow of the egress of two or three of the porters, who were deep in conversation with two passengers already seated, while sundry other porters were clustered round the carriage-door, peeping in with looks of admiring curiosity.

Surely, thought I, we are to have distinguished fellow-passengers. Who can they be? Are they the Siamese ambassadors?—who were then daily expected. There were to have been two of them, one from each of the kings. No; it is second class; it cannot possibly be they. Could it be Spurgeon and one of his deacons 'doing it cheap'? No; hardly likely. So we entered the carriage with doubt and curiosity.

At the further end of the carriage, with his back to the engine, sat a man, whose closely clipped hair, bullet head, and broken nose, plainly told me what his profession was. Facing me, on the opposite side, sat his companion, a person of much more prepossessing appearance and manners. A glance convinced me that they were both prize-fighters.

To say that the first-mentioned individual's head was bullet-shaped, is very much to malign that projectile; for surely no piece of metal shaped as that head was could, by any possibility, be got down a gun-barrel; or even supposing it to be once down, could any known means ever get it up again. No geometrical term with which I am acquainted could possibly convey any idea of that head. It was not a decahedron, and it was not a duodecahedron; and its only claim to the title of an 'oblate spheroid' would arise from the fact of its being flattened at the pole.

My friend glanced at me, and I at him.

They were literally, and figuratively, 'ugly customers'; and I secretly hoped that they would not attempt to 'improve the shining hour' by practising their art upon us. However, I soon found that there was no cause for alarm on this head, for the 'spheroid' was very soon in a slumbering, passive state; and as I am naturally rather partial to eliciting information from peculiar characters, such as one does not meet with in the daily walks of life, I very soon got into conversation with my opposite neighbour, whom, despite his profession, I found to be a very polite, I had almost said gentlemanlike man. He spoke in that peculiar tone of assumption common to most Londoners, and I soon learned that his name was — say, Jones; that he was a prize-fighter; that

he had fought seven prize-battles, and had never yet been beaten; that he held himself liable to be challenged by any man alive, no matter who, or what the amount of the stakes; that, at that moment, he was acting as 'trainer,' or professional tutor, to his companion 'George,' as he called him; that they were just returning from 'George's' first prize-fight, which had come off three days before in the neighbourhood of Liverpool; that his adversary's title to the honours of victory was open to dispute, there being reason to suspect foul-play and bribery, and that it had therefore been decided that the battle should be fought over again.

All this information led on, of course, to further conversation; and on my making some remarks as to 'George's' present personal appearance, he assured me that he was very decent-looking now, compared with what he had been two days previously; for then his head was just double its present size, and that he had brought it down to its present dimensions by the copious external application of castor-oil, and that in a few days' time he would look *quite respectable*.

I thought to myself that his ideas of respectability must certainly differ very much from my own; for, as I glanced at the physiognomy in question, I was much inclined to doubt whether all the castor-oil in creation, let it be ever so 'cold drawn,' could possibly impress the stamp of respectability upon it. But as I considered that tastes differ, and that it was not for me to set up my own as a standard, I did not dispute his statement, but led him on to further conversation.

He informed me that in early life he had been a carter or drayman in London, and that he had never but once come into collision with the municipal authorities, and that occurred when he was pursuing the comparatively peaceful calling before named. It appears that he had a *difficulty*, as brother Jonathan would express it, with a turnpike-man, relative to an alleged act of extortion on the part of the latter.

In writing the biography of all great men, it is customary to relate anecdotes of their early life, to serve as a foreshadowing of what their future developments were expected to be. So in the case in question, the latent fire of that genius which in after years was to shine forth so brilliantly, flashed out gloriously on this occasion. In his own expressive language, 'he jumped off his cart, squared at the man, and gave him one for his knob.'

He was about to resume his seat, with the pleasing consciousness of having resisted oppression, and done his duty like an Englishman, when he was suddenly seized by two myrmidons of the law, was brought up on a charge of assault and battery, for which he got certain days in durance vile, and then returned to the bosom of that society he was afterwards so much to adorn—a wiser and a sadder man.

This appears to have been the turning-point in his life: disgusted with commercial pursuits, for which he felt that he was in no way adapted, he entered into his present profession, which he appeared to have followed with that success which invariably attends perseverance and assiduity.

His conversation and remarks being of a somewhat desultory nature, I found great difficulty in getting at anything like a consecutive account of his life; but from his various remarks, I gathered that he had worked very hard at his profession.

His first introduction to his companion, George, struck me as having some claims to the credit of originality, to say the very least of it. He said that George was brought to his house by a mutual friend, with a request that he (Jones) would take him in hand. 'I rather liked his looks, so I up with my flat and hit him a blow on his nose; upon this, George began to "to shew fight" in good style; so, seeing

him to be "gamey," I undertook to train him, and make the best I could of him.

On my making some remarks about George, and what his future prospects were, he replied that he could hardly make up his mind as to how he would be likely to turn out. Tapping his own forehead, he remarked that 'George was rather soft there'—'that he had no head,' and that a fighting-man should have a 'good head,' so as to know when to take a 'liberty'—that the success of a fight often depended as much upon the head as the *fists*; and that though George was the 'gameyist' fellow going, he was fearful that want of head, and fondness for drink, would prevent his rising to the dazzling height attained by some others of his profession.

For himself, he furnished a strong argument in favour of teetotalism, by saying that although he kept a public-house in London, he never drank anything when going through the fatiguing operation of training, and very little upon any other occasion, except now and then when on an *out* of the present kind; and he instanced it as a proof of the great goodness of their Liverpool friends, that he had been kept in a state of partial inebriation for nearly six days without its costing him a penny.

This was their first visit to Liverpool, and he expressed himself much pleased with the kindness they had received, and likewise with the general urbanity of the police authorities in that town, who had never once molested them during the engagement.

I asked him whether men in their profession ever saved money. He replied that it was quite impossible. When a man had been fortunate, he was made a good deal of by his companions, who kept him in a constant whirl of drunken excitement until his money was all gone, and then he had to get up another fight to make more; while if he was beaten, the whole of the expenses fell upon him, besides the lost stakes, and then he got into debt; and he advised me—parenthetically and in confidence—never to make a match for so low a sum as L.25, as it could not possibly pay, for the trade expenses alone amounted to over L.30; the principal items of which he enumerated, one of them, I remember, consisting of a 'trainer at L.3 a week and his keep, for seven weeks at least.' Only fancy letting one's self out to be punched and hammered at by a prize-fighter day by day for seven long weeks! For the trainer's office consists of a series of daily encounters with the trainee, so that he may be in good practice when he comes before the public.

He intimated to me that, however much I might be fascinated by the outward show and glitter of their kind of life, it was in reality a very hard one, at least until a man had obtained a *position*; and that nothing but the excitement of popular applause, and having a public reputation to keep unsullied, could possibly carry them through it.

I have often remarked, in all public professions, the great amount of brotherly feeling that pervades the whole body. See with what generosity and willingness authors, actors, and musicians come forward to the aid of a needy brother—by benefits at theatres, by public readings, by concerts, and similar means. And the same feeling extends, strange as it may seem, even to the profession in question, as the following instance will shew; and in spite of the horrid and revolting circumstances attending the affair, it yet shines like a streak of sunlight through the awful moral darkness—a proof to my mind that, let a man debase and brutalise himself to the lowest possible point, he cannot entirely eradicate his manhood; that now and then it will flash up and reclaim its lost throne, let the reign be ever so short.

My companion casually inquired whether I was acquainted with Ede. I replied that I had not that

pleasure, and, moreover, that I was never at a prize-fight in my life. At first, he seemed not disposed to believe me; but on my assuring him that such was really the case, he looked at me more in pity than in anger, but still seemed hardly able to conceive how in this enlightened nineteenth century any one could possibly have gone so far on life's journey as I had without having at least heard of the hero in question. He therefore endeavoured to recall him to my mind by enumerating some of his more celebrated acts of personal prowess. 'You surely must remember Ede, he who killed "Jack" Somebody in his last fight.'

'Killed his man!' I replied with horror.

'Yes,' he said, 'it was a bad job, poor fellow,' and then he told me all about how the man received a hit on the jaw *after four hours' fighting*; how he was carried off the field; how he never spoke a word after the fatal blow; and how by six next morning he was dead.

'But how about his poor wife and children?' said I.

'Ah, poor woman!' he replied, 'it was a bad job; but we all did the best we could for her. We got her up a benefit, and managed to raise about three hundred pounds, which put her into a good public-house; and we all do our best to make it pay. But what,' he added, 'is all that, compared with the loss of such a husband as she had? For my part, I would not lose my wife for three millions of pounds. She is everything to me; and I have my old mother to keep, and I have brought up my two little brothers without its costing anybody else a penny;' and then he went on to say that there was nothing like civility and kindness—it cost but little, and he had always found that they made him friends wherever he went.

Bravo! thought I; there is a green spot yet left even in this rough debased heart—one little thread yet remaining to connect it with human nature. Imagine for a moment that son tending his aged mother, a mother to whom, perhaps, he owed no debt for early lessons of love and kindness; of whom, in the recollections of his early days, he can recall few pleasing memories, few early admonitions from her lips, which might have stood him in good stead through life as his counsellor and guide.

Even the poor brutalised George, who all this time had been dozing away in a state of battered stupidity—even he had some one who loved him, and whom he loved in return.

Of Nero it was said, that over his tomb some loving hand was seen each day to drop a flower; so poor George found it impossible to keep away from a girl in London whom he loved, and who felt lonely without him, although he had to return to Liverpool in a few days to have another mauling, for his friends were going to get him up another fight for his own peculiar benefit, to reimburse him for sundry losses sustained during his last engagement.

And so I drew near home; and on leaving the train, my companion shook me warmly by the hand, and expressed a hope that when I next came to London I would give him a call.

So he went on his way, and I on mine; and as I walked, I thought; and the more I thought, the more I became confused. Wrong seemed to be getting right, and right seemed to have no merit attachable to it. My conscience told me that I ought to hold that man and his profession in utter and supreme abhorrence; but when I thought of the little streaks of sunlight which ever and anon broke through that dark and heavy cloud, I was fain, though still condemning all fighting on general grounds, to subdue certain angry feelings, and to take shelter under the Master's lesson, 'that if I was without sin, I might then cast the stone.' And I asked myself a question

which I could not answer—why am not I the fighter, and he in my place, wrapping himself up in his pharisaical cloak of spiritual pride, and thanking Heaven that he is not such as I? Who can answer me that? No, I do not feel quite comfortable in sitting in judgment on this unfortunate person, as I must consider him to be, without first ascertaining whether the five talents committed to my care, with a clearer knowledge as to their uses, have been made to produce other five also? If it has turned out that I have learned a lesson in charity, my half-hour's ride was not in vain.

PEPSIN.

WHEN food first enters the stomach, it is not, as our readers know, in a condition to be absorbed at once into the blood, for the purpose of renovating the effete tissues of the system. It must first undergo the process of digestion, so as to be reduced to a soluble state, or, generally speaking, to such a condition as to be capable of absorption and assimilation. The digestibility of various kinds of food, and the exact character of the digestive process, have been tested in various ways. Schultz experimented on dogs and cats, which he killed at successive stages of the process; Beaumont on a patient whose stomach had, by a gunshot wound, been made tolerably accessible to observation; and Gosse—who possessed the strange power of vomiting at will, and was so enabled to recover portions of food which had been for a time exposed to the action of the gastric fluid—experimented on himself. The results of these various attempts to elucidate the digestive process were in many points conflicting; and but little less satisfactory, so far as concerned the comparative digestibility of different alimentary substances, were the phenomena which resulted from the dissolution of food in fistulae by artificial means. The *modus operandi* alone was established with any accuracy. Under the generic name of catalysis, chemists are accustomed to group those mysterious processes in which a substance is converted into what they call an isomeric variety of itself by means of some other body or bodies which are in themselves incapable of being affected by the operation. Of these processes, that of digestion proved to be one. It was found that, by the action of the gastric fluid, the food is converted into a substance chemically identical with the original body, but, nevertheless, possessing very distinct and peculiar properties; and that the gastric fluid is a combination of a substance called pepsin, or the *cooking* principle, with an acid which is now generally supposed to be that which, under the name of lactic acid, gives to sour milk its pungent and peculiar flavour. It may be that other acids, such as acetic, phosphoric, and hydrochloric, are also present in smaller quantities; but on this point the greatest chemists are still at variance.

Whether pepsin is secreted in a neutral state, and generates the acid by acting as a ferment on the amylaceous substances of the food, or whether the acid is a primary constituent of the active natural juice, is also still disputed. The prevalent opinion would seem to be that pepsin is a neutral secretion. It certainly possesses the inherent property of causing fermentation, although, without the acid, it has no digestive power. The question altogether is an important one; for, if it be a neutral secretion, the part played by the saliva in the whole machinery of digestion assumes additional importance, as we must then conclude that one of its constituents—*diastase*—is employed in the stomach to convert the starchy matter of the food into grape-sugar,* which is in its turn 'converted by the pepsin into lactic acid, without

the aid of which pepsin could not perform its natural functions.'

In any view, pepsin must be regarded as the chief and indispensable element in producing the change necessary to the absorption and assimilation of food. Without it, all the rest are powerless; and hence the importance which its recent introduction upon a large scale into medical practice by Drs Corvisart of Paris, and Ballard of London, has acquired for it as a curative agent in cases of dyspepsy.

Dr Landerer of Athens is said to have been the first who employed artificial gastric juice in medical practice. This juice he is understood to have eliminated from the stomach of a wolf; but even as early as the year 1834 it had been discovered that the gastric secretion retained its power if removed from the body shortly after a meal; while the rennet, or fourth stomach of the ruminants, had even been used in cases similar to those treated by Dr Landerer to replace and represent the natural peptic principle.

The quantity of pepsin contained in the gastric juice was about the same time discovered by Eberle to be in the proportion of 1.25 to 97 parts of water, and nearly 1.75 parts of salts; and by Schwann, to be capable of precipitation only from the fluid contained in the glandular structure of the stomach. The method of preparing it adopted by M. Boudault, the distinguished Parisian pharmacist, as stated in his Report to the Imperial Academy of Medicine, is as follows: From a number of rennet-bags, turned outside in, and carefully washed, the mucous membrane, which contains the secretory vessels, is scraped off, and, after being reduced to pulp, is steeped for twelve hours in cold distilled water. A small quantity of acetate, or sugar, of lead is then added, which precipitates the pepsin. This precipitate, after being in its turn treated with sulphuretted hydrogen, which separates the lead as a sulphuret, is filtered, and left to evaporate either to a sirup or a powder, as may be wished. Care, however, must be taken that the degree of heat to which it is exposed during the evaporating process shall not exceed 120° of Fahrenheit, as, if suffered to evaporate under a higher temperature, the pepsin loses its digestive properties. It has also been found that, from its excessive deliquescence, exposure to the air tends to its speedy decomposition whether as a powder or a sirup: its smell becomes very offensive, and its taste extremely nauseous. M. Boudault, therefore, mixes the sirup with starch, so that the mixture, on being carefully dried, forms a gray powder resembling coarse wheaten flour. It can thus, when required for use, be brought, by the addition of starch or pepsin, as the case may be, to a uniform standard of strength, and may, if necessary, be mixed with equal ease with muriate of morphia, salts of iron, strychnia, or other chemical reagents which do not affect its digestive properties.

The pleasantest way, perhaps, of administering the preparation, is either in water or between two slices of bread; but, taken in any way, it has been found, in a great majority of cases, to cope successfully with the most serious derangements of the gastric organs, not only by its immediate action on the food, but by restoring to the organs themselves their lost activity.

Dr Ballard, in his book on *Artificial Digestion*, notes one case among many which would seem to preclude all notion of the cure being attributable to fortuitous causes. We quote it as we find it abridged in the same number of the *Saturday Review*, to which we have already referred. A lady, sixty-four years of age, had, during four years, 'suffered pain, which she

* *Saturday Review*, No. 74, p. 289. To the article here quoted we are indebted for much that may be deemed valuable in the present paper. But the reader may be referred for further information to Dr Ballard's *Artificial Digestion* and the *British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review* for 1857, *passim*.

had "no words to describe," for three or four hours after every meal. The natural consequences were excessive prostration and complete disgust for food; and she had for many weeks limited herself to four rusks and a little milk and beef-tea *per diem*. The first day pepsin was used, she ate with ease and enjoyment a mutton chop, although, on the day before, she had endured intense agony for no less than five hours after her ordinary meal. In a few days, she ate pretty freely, and gradually improved, and at length was able to give up the pepsin entirely, to eat without pain, and walk some miles without fatigue.*

Now, when we consider how common a disease dyspepsy is, and how immense, in spite of the systematic opposition from many quarters to everything like a rational interpretation of the connection between physical and moral phenomena, the influence of the physical condition on the mental condition is—producing suicides in cases where, with a different state of health, only depression or grief would have followed—the importance of such a discovery as that of Drs Landerer and Corvisart cannot be over-estimated. In comparison with unhealthy secretions in confluence with untoward circumstances, all other causes, except insanity—disgust of life, poverty, thwarted love, shame, remorse, grief, the agonies of despair and jealousy—exercise but a very small suicidal influence. Nor, when it is considered that the juices which flow into the intestinal canal during the twenty-four hours amount to about one-seventh of a man's whole weight, need our readers wonder at the statement. A man weighing ten stones will secrete during that time about three pounds seven ounces of saliva, which shall contain about half an ounce of solid matter; of bile, he will secrete as much; of gastric juice, which shall contain about six ounces and a half of solid matter, he will secrete thirteen pounds; of pancreatic juice, seven ounces; and nearly the same quantity of intestinal juice. With these facts before us, can it be doubted that the physician might often avert a catastrophe against which the moralist would preach in vain?

A WIFE BY ADVERTISEMENT:

A STORY OF 1758.

My grandfather was appointed rector of a little village in Nottinghamshire in the year 1758. I am myself an old man, having memories of more or less importance attached to every year of this century; and I could box, wrestle, play cricket, and had even made speeches against the Jacobins, before eighteen hundred was born or thought of.

A clergyman's life was not quite so strict a matter a hundred years ago as it is to-day. The priests neither cared to rule themselves by so high a standard as our modern clergy do, nor was it expected of them by their flocks. Mr Hume's *Essays* had a great influence among those younger clergy who thought, and the customs and laws of 'the town,' among those who did not think. Though this was an evil of a tremendous kind, there was one benefit in it which we are apt now-a-days to overlook—the clergy had more sympathy with those persons who would not come immediately under their influence than they have under the present system. It is thought very shocking now for a priest to be seen in the theatre, and scarcely less so at the opera-house; while, if he were to visit Cremorne or Rosherville Gardens, or Highbury Barn, it is most likely his congregation would take such offence that they would move away in a flock as multitudinous and final as a migration of swallows. But in my grandfather's time, priests and actors were found in daily communion; indeed, such men as

Bishop Warburton and David Garrick were friends; even Mr Whitfield desired his people to go to the comical Ned Shuter's benefit, as that celebrated actor was a 'gracious soul';* and the sons of other clergymen than Dr Primrose went upon the stage as a means of livelihood; while every country rector who came up to town made a point of seeing Mr Mossop and Mr Garrick in Shakspeare's plays, and of visiting Vauxhall and Ranelagh.

Just such a time of visiting London had come to my grandfather in the spring of 1758. He was then in the twenty-fifth year of his age, and resolved to enjoy himself for a time on the strength of his recent presentation. He had never been in town before; the nearest approach he had made to metropolitan pleasures were such as his restricted allowance had afforded him during his studentship at Cambridge. Hence it was he was resolved not merely to have a dip, but a thorough plunge, into the amusements of London.

Accordingly, he went to Drury Lane, and saw Mr Mossop in *Hamlet*, and Mr Garrick in a whole series of characters. He saw Mr Barry in *Richard III.* at Covent Garden. He was present when Mr Garrick and Mrs Clive appeared in the new play of *The Upholsterer, or what News?* and saw the quidnunc of the day ruining himself by trembling for the ruin of the nation. He was at Mr Shuter's benefit in the *Bold Stroke for a Wife*, which had not been acted for so long. He went to the entertainment at Marybone Gardens, and the wire-rope dancing, and concerts on the Jew's-harp at Sadler's Wells. He drank the waters with the genteel company at Islington Spa. He heard Handel's *Acis* and *Galatea* at Ranelagh, visited the Camel and Dromedary, saw the moving figure of the great king of Prussia, and every other rarity with which the town was amusing itself.

There was one thing which was a matter of perpetual unrest to my grandfather; namely, that he was unmarried. He had those manners which are pleasant to ladies, or, as it would have been expressed in his days, to the sex; he was well made in limb, and somewhat handsome in feature; of a very affable disposition; not given to drinking, gaming, or attending the cockpit; only a little partial to the races; ready always either for cards or for dancing; indeed, the sort of young gentleman ladies were supposed to like. Yet he could find no lady answering to that standard his eyes and his heart set up. He wished for one of a gay and pleasant disposition, yet free from those vices which the ladies of the plays, novels, essays, and memoirs of the age possess and exhibit so sadly—one, in fact, who did not make the town her rule of life; who would find more delight in the society of a loving husband than in the meeting-places of the beaux; who yet would pay some attention to fashion and to personal graces; who would be agreeable, if not a beauty: last, and I fancy far from least, he wished her to have some nice little sum at her own disposal. All this we have seen set down in private records which the old gentleman has left us. Indeed, my mother has told me that she believes he once worked up these requisitions into an advertisement, and inserted them in the *Public Advertiser*. If so, it brought him no wife, although, through the medium of another advertisement, he became acquainted with that estimable lady to whom in the second degree I owe my existence. Advertising for wives, and even for husbands, was not unusual a century ago, as every one who has had occasion to search newspapers of that date well knows. A very odd and pleasant collection might be formed from their columns.

Like many other young gentlemen of the period

* Though only for once. See Lackington's *Memoirs*.

who came up from the provinces to spend a little time and money in London, my grandfather the rector thought it not improbable that in so plentifully stocked a society, he might perchance run across a wife. The wish was entered in his diary the night before he started. Now the custom is reversed. Our city-clerk, with the air and talk of a capitalist, and the costume of a beau, rushes into the country at Easter, Whitsuntide, or Christmas; finds his way into the simple susceptible heart of a country maiden, woos her, adds visit to visit, and condescends to wed her; for she believes it a condescension, until the slow process of marriage-troubles reveals to her the painful sight and sense of her own superiority. Gentlemen were bolder in my grandfather's days than they are in mine; and ladies also. If either saw a person of opposite sex at church, at the theatre, Ranelagh, or elsewhere, they very often made signal of admiration or invitation too plain to be doubted. This was indeed one of the things which aided young men of property and title in their frightful 'affairs of gallantry,' and is the pivot and turning-point in all the memoirs, comedies, novels, and magazine-stories of that time.

One evening, in the summer of 1758, my grandfather betook himself to Vauxhall. He had seen very many young demoiselles during his stay in town; but he had as yet received no wound which the spear of Telephus alone could heal. He had been also to Vauxhall two or three evenings previously, and had glanced and ogled with all the earnestness and pertinacity of an unengaged man; but this fateful evening put a close to all these wanderings and uncertainties. While he was looking backwards and forwards with his customary inquisitiveness, a young lady entered between two gentlemen, who suddenly drew his roving eyes to herself, and unwittingly kept them fixed there during the whole performance. Before he looked for it, my poor grandfather was overcome.

As soon as the songs were over, he followed her from the orchestra to the banqueting-room, and through the long leafy colonnades, with their myriads of little lamps. He stopped when she stopped. When the company were rushing to see the water-works, he kept close to her; and every time she looked at him—and she did so frequently, by choice or chance—he assumed a most serious, speaking, and melancholy countenance.

It was a great sorrow to him when he saw the young lady take her departure, and marked her into her coach. However, he resolved to assure himself of her dwelling-place, and began to picture himself asking the consent of a father or a guardian, or opposing a rival, wealthier and more favoured than himself. He jumped into a coach, and bade the driver follow that in which the young lady had seated herself. But he was not to succeed so easily. The night was foggy when they started; it gradually grew denser; and before they had reached Westminster, my grandfather's coachman turned round and called out that he had quite lost sight of the chase. So he was ordered by my hurt and disconsolate relative to drive to the coffee-house at which he was staying.

This was by no means the first young lady whose bright eyes had stricken my grandfather in public places. Other young ladies he forgot, after a good supper, or at the sight of a fresh face, or at the thought how impossible it would be to know them, or by consideration of the difference there is between looking a beauty and being good. But he could not forget the maiden of Vauxhall. He lost his appetite, not only for town delicacies, but also for town amusements. At last, after three days of suffering, during which, it must be confessed, he neither wished nor tried to heal himself, he sought consolation, and kept

hope from starving, by inserting the following in the *Public Advertiser*:

'A young lady who was at Vauxhall last Tuesday night, in company with two elderly gentlemen, could not but observe a young clergyman, who, being near her at the orchestra during the performance, and especially at the last song, gazed upon her with the utmost attention. He earnestly hopes, if unmarried, she will favour him with a line, directed to V. V., at the bar of the Temple-exchange Coffee-house, to inform him whether fortune, family, character, and profession, may not entitle him, upon further knowledge, to hope an interest in her heart. He begs she will pardon the method he has taken to let her know the situation of his mind, as, being a stranger, he despaired of doing it in any other way, or even of seeing her more. As his views are founded on the most honourable principles, he presumes to hope the occasion will justify, if she generously breaks through this trifling formality of the sex, rather than, by a cruel silence, render unhappy one who must ever expect to continue so, if debarred from a nearer acquaintance with her, in whose power alone it is to complete his felicity.'

Unluckily, this advertisement was either not seen by the young lady, or, if seen, the young gentleman had been unnoticed, or, if noticed, she had not found in herself any corresponding desire towards him. My grandfather was so solemnised by this sudden love, and the hopeless issue of it, that he could find no pleasure in theatres, gardens, or routs, and actually sought his excitement for the next fortnight in attending daily prayers at the Abbey, the Temple Church, St Andrew's on Holborn Hill, or St Paul's. After that time, he began to reason with himself that she might go often to the places whither the town resorted, and that another chance meeting at the theatres, or at Ranelagh, if not very likely, was still not quite impossible. This was the last straw in sight of his rapidly sinking hope.

Accordingly he went; at first, blind and dumb, to whatever was played or sung before him, unmoved alike by Garrick and Mrs Clive in the merriest farces, and by the compositions of Handel and Dr Arne; but, by degrees, these reinterested him; next, he glanced at the bright faces with their mighty *caprioles*, their 'post-chaise and horses, chair and chairmen' on their heads, in the boxes; he began to find himself curable; and he returned to Nottinghamshire, though a slightly altered, still a very merry man; he amused himself reading, on his road, the two new volumes of *Tristram Shandy* by his brother in orders, the Rev. Laurence Sterne.

My grandfather had been absent from his cure exactly two months, during which time his very light and easy duties were taken by an unbeneficed friend, a schoolmaster in Nottingham, and man of high repute at Cambridge. These consisted in riding over on Sunday morning, putting on a clerical wig kept in the sacristy, and a surplice much more like a smock-frock than that habitually recognised by ecclesiologists as the officiating costume of an English priest, and reading a sermon of Dr Sherlock's on the evidences of Christianity, to a few old women, a dozen framework knitters, and a number of children, who, as they perceived neither the drift nor the need of it, thought it mightily learned. Pastoral visitation was an exercise my grandfather, at this polite period of his life, conceived quite unnecessary; and frequent non-residence was not only not a sin, but a laudable and gentlemanlike habit in the town season; and, if funds permitted, in the Bath and Matlock season also.

To these not onerous duties my grandfather returned with a heart almost whole. There was just a scratch in that organ—I can scarcely call it a

wound—which gave him a little smart at eve and in solitude, in all such idle times and conditions as court memory. To get rid of this he made twilight lively by inviting an old college friend, a county captain, or one of the pupils of the Nottingham tutor, to stay with him; and, when no visitor was to be had, by smoking his pipe at the Lord Ligonier Arms. He also added to his light clerical tasks the heavier avocation of an angler; and often, when his parishioners were taking their dogs rattling along the Trent-side on summer-evenings, they came upon their solitary priest with his fishing-rod, who, although he looked upon apostolical succession in that sense in which the non-jurors and the Romanists held it, as quite beneath the notice of a man of taste and ton, very frequently found himself their successor in the piscatorial act of toiling all day and catching nothing.

Just at this time some leading political persons in the county were using great efforts to start a new church and anti-gallican newspaper for the midland district—I forget its name. Like so many of modern date, it was just got to move, strutted a little way, bragged of its power and vitality, and suddenly dropped down dead. The promoters mainly depended on the support of the squirearchy and clergy; letters were addressed to all these persons; amongst others, consequently, to my grandfather. He was delighted—it came to him in the light of that deliverance from *ennui* which he had long been looking for. He not only promised to use his utmost efforts to further its circulation amongst his clerical brethren, but also volunteered his services as contributor.

I have in my possession a book of printed slips from this newspaper, being the entire series of my grandfather's contributions to it. They consist mainly of panegyrics on Frederick the Great, at that time the most popular man in England. These are a specimen of their titles: A Sketch of the Life of that Grand Character who is the Hope of Europe (the king of Prussia); the Protestant Hero (the king of Prussia); an Essay on the Literary Labours of the Great Philosophical Monarch (the king of Prussia); the Scourge of Superstition: an Ode to the King of Prussia; Tribulator Gallie: an Ode to the Great Frederick; Caesar Outdone, or a History of the Battles of our Magnanimous Ally (the king of Prussia).

To these are appended a series of papers, some in print, and some only in manuscript, imagined by my well-meaning grandfather to be in the style of the *Teller* and *Spectator*; but they are not of that use for the illustration of the middle of the eighteenth century which those inimitable papers are for that of its commencement, or I should either have published them, or presented them to our national library at the Museum.

Every Thursday morning, if my grandfather had not started very much earlier to fetch it, a lad came over from the printer's at Nottingham with this paper. In February 1759, the twentieth week after its birth, and seventh before its death, the boy brought the small quarto, as the young rector was dressing himself for a day's shooting in Lord Byron's park at Newstead, the noble owner* of which, six years afterwards, killed his neighbour, Mr Chaworth, in a duel. With him in his bedroom, making sarcastic remarks on every article of dress as he put it on, at every glance he gave towards his legs, or in the mirror, were his friends, Captain Clayton, that renowned marksman, and the Nottingham tutor, who had been confessor and adviser in that delicate matter of the heart which occurred to my relative when in London. He lengthened the already too-extended and too-interrupted dressing-time, by occa-

sional glances at the newspaper; a paragraph, and then a turn at the toilet; another paragraph, and then the toilet again. News, however, was the smallest matter in those days. 'Our own correspondent' was not yet allowed the honour of having his entire communication appear in print; the editor skimmed the cream off it, which he presented to the readers after his own confection. Hence it was that the rector had soon finished the news, and begun upon the advertisements. There was not that number which appeared in the London papers, and what there was was a puddle compared with the ocean we are used to in this day; but the advertisers in this midland print averaged from three to six. Prominently, amid these few, stood forth the following:

'If any young clergyman, somewhat agreeable in person, and who has a small independent fortune, can be well recommended as to strictness of life and good temper, firmly attached to this present happy establishment, and is willing to engage in the matrimonial estate, with an agreeable young lady, in whose power it is to bestow £100 per annum—any person whom this may suit, may call at the second house in Berkeley Street within four days of this advertisement, having previously left a line directed to A. Z. at the same house.'

This smote my grandfather with such a sudden, peculiar, and visible effect, that both his friends inquired if there was any very astounding news in the paper. He laughed, and said there was an advertisement for himself. He tossed it over to them, telling them to read the second from the top. While they were doing so, he himself was the channel of a whole flood of unexpected thoughts and resolutions. Here was the perpetual cure for the unavoidable *ennui* of village-life, the longed-for talisman to make the rectory-house endurable, nay, even sunny and glad some. A London lady, too; not like some rich Nottinghamshire damsels he had been introduced to, who had twice been to the county town, and who thought themselves the cynosure of all eyes in their grandmother's seldom worn pinner. True, it was a lottery; and among so many he was likely to lose after all. He felt disinclined for the rook-shooting.

The captain began immediately to rally him on this advertisement, saying he was evidently fore-appointed to fit its standard. He spake the very thoughts that were in my relative's own mind. He advised him to set off for town to-morrow, and be in the field before any hungry London curate had snapped her up. 'You will be a fool, if you don't try,' said he; 'it will but be an adventure if you lose. But' (with a military and fashionable expletive), he added, 'you are sure to win, old boy.'

My grandfather appealed to his clerical friend.

'I will say nothing,' said he. 'You ought to remember what fine things you have told me over and over again about a certain young lady; undying love, and so on.'

The captain informed the younger clergyman that the elder, 'like all other schoolmasters, was an ass, and always remembered his trade was to teach, and spoke to men as if they were lads.' A controversy ensued between the priest and the soldier; in which (my grandfather's inclination being on that side, and his opponent also doggedly dumb as to reasons for not going) the man of the sword got the best. He said he would excuse the young parson from the shooting, and so give him time to make ready for starting by to-morrow's coach. The elder parson said he should fulfil a promised call on the father of one of his pupils, and should go into Bedfordshire by to-day's coach, if he could get back to Nottingham in time. Accordingly, the captain and my grandfather sat down to breakfast, and the tutor mounted his

* Uncle of the poet.

horse, saying, as he rode off, 'he was sure his friend would sleep off his Quixotic notion of rushing after an unknown lady of untold, and, therefore, of pretty advanced age.'

My anxious relative, however, arrived in town by the next coach, bought a new wig and suit, and having left a letter proclaiming his hopes, called at the address mentioned in the advertisement. He was shewn into a room handsomely furnished, and hung with Mr Hogarth's new prints of the Election, which had only been published a few weeks. Here he sat down in great trepidation, and waited for above twenty minutes, during which time he first gave cool consideration to some of the less pleasant possibilities of his adventure—the chance of the lady being much older than himself, or marked with the small-pox, or stammering, or lame, or possibly squinting hideously.

At last the door-handle sounded, and the door flew open. Guess his surprise when his friend the tutor from Nottingham marched in. My grandfather at first blushed up to his eyes. 'What! we were to appear as rivals, then?' he stammered out—perceiving at the same time *why* his friend, if he might any longer call him so, had dissuaded him, and stolen a march to London under feint of Bedfordshire. In a moment, however, he consoled himself by a comparison of his own person and age with that of his treacherous brother in orders. These thoughts made him silent, and, for a minute or two, also forgetful of his awkward position. Should they see the young lady alone, or together? Had they no other rivals? Possibly, she was desirous of a Nottinghamshire husband, and had advertised in no other newspaper.

The elder clergyman burst out laughing. At this my grandfather was aroused, and laughed also—more, however, to take off his nervousness than from spontaneous sympathy.

'My dear Jack,' said the tutor, 'I see I must give in; I shall stand no chance against a brisk young fellow like you.' And he sprang up and abruptly left the room. My grandfather heard his laugh on the stairs. He began to see that he was being hoaxed, and felt bewildered. How the squires, captains, and parsons would laugh at him!

A moment after, the tutor reappeared, leading in a young lady. How shall I tell my grandfather's surprise? It was that very same maiden whom he had watched and followed at Vauxhall, and sighed after so many times since. To this first happy perception soon followed the second.

'Armida, my love—my dearest friend, the Reverend John Grantley.'

'Jack, my lad—my dear little niece.'

The explanation is very short. The merry old clergyman had perceived from Grantley's clear description, at his very first confession, that the young lady by whom he had been smitten was his own niece, a native of Nottingham, at that time staying in London with his two brothers the lawyers, and with them going the round of town amusements. She had returned to Nottingham before my grandfather. The further he thought himself from her, the nearer he really was—a consideration which often filled his confessor with inward laughter. She had frequently seen him from her father's window; had heard him preach in St Peter's, though hidden from him by the Christmas bushes and the deep wooden walls. She had even been in her uncle's house one day when the young rector called there, and was bent upon seeing and speaking with him; but her determined relative sent her home, promising to arrange an introduction before the month was out. She confessed she liked the look and constancy of her admirer, and entered heartily into her uncle's merry scheme of the advertisement. The captain was taken into counsel as accomplice, and agreed to urge my grandfather to

the departing point. There was no fear of any other clergyman answering the advertisement; for the circulation was too lamentably small, and the contriver knew the habits and property of every other clerical subscriber.

LITERARY LIFE IN GERMANY.

Two graceful and charming volumes are lying before us, to which we would invite our readers' attention.* The author's design is to give a popular history of German poetry, with sketches of the lives of the poets; and this is executed in such a manner that we rise from the perusal with a wonderfully clear view of so extensive a field; while the career of many of the personages is so artistically delineated as to give the narrative all the interest of a romance. We cannot, however, include the verse in this warm commendation, for the volumes, to use a favourite phrase of our ancestors, are 'interspersed with poetry'—consisting of translated specimens of the German works referred to. If those translations are faithful, the specimens must be ill chosen, since they do not bear out our author's criticism; but the most courteous, and probably the most correct, supposition is, that, as usually happens, the subtle spirit of poetry has escaped in the process of transfusion from one language into another.

In the first volume, the history is brought down to the period when in Germany—devastated by the Peasant War, then by the atrocities of Anabaptism, and the more dreadful atrocities in which it was extinguished, then by the Thirty Years' War, which cut off two-thirds of the population of the country—the lamp of poetry, and indeed of literature generally, after one or two fitful flickers, was wholly extinguished. It was later and more slowly re-illuminated at the Revival than in any other country in Europe; but gradually, at length, the spirit of German poetry arose from its ashes, though streaming no longer in the national gushes of a homogeneous character which had before distinguished it. Acted upon by new influences, it was divided into numerous schools, all insignificant when viewed from the column of history, but each appearing great in the eyes of its contemporaries. In the eighteenth century, the prosaic hymns of Gellert, and the lackadaisical idyls of Gessner, procured for their authors unbounded reputation; but, at the same epoch, Klopstock came forth, and achieved a fame that even now, though dimmed, is not altogether extinguished. Then, as time flowed on, Lessing, Herder, Bürger, Wieland, Schiller, and Goethe rose above the brightening horizon. It is not with the genius of individual poets, however, we have anything to do for the present: we wish to inquire into their status in the aggregate as a portion of the literary body; and while obtaining some idea of this, an instructive comparison will unconsciously suggest itself between them and their brethren of our own country.

In England, there is no such thing as a republic of letters; there, each literary man stands alone, and he does not obtain even the personal acquaintance of his fellows in virtue of his calling. It is different in Germany, where literature is a species of freemasonry, in which the members of the craft look upon themselves as brethren, and where these members are

* *Poets and Poetry of Germany*. Biographical and Critical Notices. By Madame L. Davézié de Pontès. 2 vols. London: Chapman & Hall. 1856.

recognised by the rest of the people as belonging to a distinct profession. When the young and poor Klopstock, for instance, the victim of love and poetry, was indulging his dreams and his sorrows by the Lake of Zurich, he suddenly received a letter from the king of Denmark, inviting him to his court, and offering him a trifling annuity in the meantime, and the reversion of some post worthy of his acceptance. When Lessing published his drama, the *Laocon*, he was at once invited, as much to his surprise as delight, to remove from Berlin, and undertake the superintendence of a new national theatre just opened at Hamburg; and when his salary ceased here, and he was reduced to desperation, being in want of the very necessities of life, the Duke of Brunswick, who knew him only by his works, tendered him the post of librarian at Wolfenbüttel. When the Elector of Mainz wanted a director for the university of Erfurt, he applied at once to Wieland, as a man whose fitness for the post was proved by his published books. The poet did not find the situation an agreeable one; but he was soon invited by the Duchess of Weimar to become tutor to the young duke; and various unsolicited compliments were paid to his genius by other princes and nobles. Nor were other classes of the community less discriminating. German authors have usually had a resource in tuition; for the people considered that they who shewed themselves capable of turning to good advantage their own education, must be well fitted to educate others.

Let us not imagine, however, that literature in Germany was, or is now, a flourishing profession in the pecuniary sense of the term. The nobles, although indeed shorn of their beams, were still the dominant party, and they alone were eligible for either civil or military posts of any consequence. They were no longer, it is true, the rivals or masters of the sovereign, who now kept them in their places by means of a standing army; but the very hopelessness of their subjection to the crown rendered them the more tenacious of their tyrannical hold upon the people. They still kept up their heritable jurisdictions, by means of which they fined, scourged, and put to death the peasant tenants; and many of those ancestral privileges remained intact till the revolution of 1848. The emoluments, therefore, even of those literary men who basked in the sunshine of royalty, were not great. Wieland, for instance, when invited to be tutor to the young Duke of Weimar, was offered L.90 a year for his three years of service, and after that, a pension of L.23 for life. But let us not smile at this princely generosity in a country and at a time when beef was seven farthings a pound, real less than three-halfpence, and house-rent, fuel, &c., in proportion. A thorough maid-servant thought herself well off with less than L.3 a year; a first-rate cook had L.4, 3s.; and a maid-of-all-work not quite L.2. This was at Frankfurt, Berlin, or Vienna; in the country, the remuneration of domestic labour was not so extravagant. When Voss contributed to the *Musen-Almanach*, his precarious income was about L.60 a year—a sum which Schiller declared he could live on charmingly with his wife and family—but when he was appointed director of that publication, with a fixed salary of L.70 a year, he at once married his Ernestine, with her anxious mother's approbation, which she had hitherto withheld.

Poverty, however, was, and is, no crime and no shame in Germany. It was never there inconsistent with the highest refinement and the most genial sociality. Look at this picture of the *ménage* of the author we have last mentioned: 'In May 1778, Voss became the husband of her whom he so fondly loved, and bore her back to his humble home at Wandsbeck. As, however, the single chamber with which he had been contented during his bachelor-life was now

insufficient, he hired a little garden-pavilion, and here they established themselves as well as the narrow space allowed. A clear and sparkling rill flowed at the foot of their abode; and the trees and flowers that surrounded it gave it an air of cheerfulness and gaiety which, in the eyes of the young lovers, atoned for the absence of everything but the most simple necessities. The evening after their arrival, they visited Claudius, and many a happy evening did they spend in his garden, where a chosen few were wont to meet three or four times a week. Every description of luxury was banished as unsuited to the means of the entertainers; neither tea nor coffee was allowed; beer, home-brewed, with bread and cheese, and sometimes a little cold ham, or bacon, were the only refreshments permitted; but the mirth and good-humour of the party required no stimulants; they were as happy as youth, health, friendship, and congenial society could make them. One evening, it was discovered that the provision of home-brewed beer was exhausted, and even that of cheese was waxing low. Some potatoes, however, and a little rice-soup remained from dinner, and with these, Ernestine tells us, they were as happy as princes. "When Claudius came to spend the evening with us, he always bound his little daughter to his back; she was then laid in our bed till his return home." Campe and Lessing were frequently of the party, and joined in all their innocent gaiety.

'We have lingered on this picture of rural enjoyment, because it proves how possible it is to unite the highest literary culture with the simplest mode of existence, the most perfect refinement of mind and manners with the total absence of wealth or splendour.'

This is delicious; but to complete the idea it conveys, we must give a glimpse of a very different interior, that of Wieland, in which refined comfort is heightened by the same genial warmth: 'The house of my friend is at once elegant and rural. It has a fine kitchen-garden extending to a beautiful wood, which, in its turn, stretches to the banks of the river. I dine every day with the patriarch and his four charming daughters in the library, which commands a view of an extensive and verdant meadow. I inquired who was that robust and handsome youth, mowing the grass around a thicket of roses. It was his son. I for my part assist the mother and daughters in their household duties. Country-life reigns here in all its charming simplicity. Goethe came to dine with us the other day; nothing could be more simple than his manners. It was delightful to see these two poets seated side by side, without jealousy, pretension, or affectation, calling each other by their Christian names, as they did in their youth, resembling much less two *beaux esprits* than two good merchants of Gröningen, united by the ties of affection and relationship. The daughters of the great Herder shortly after joined us. Beauty, goodness, wit, genius, and sincere affection—all united in this little room.'

The minnesingers passed away, with the thirteenth century, and the meistersingers were practically extinct at the close of the seventeenth; but the poets of Germany seem gregarious by nature; and in the latter part of the eighteenth century another national association arose of a similar kind, called the Hainbund. The *Musen-Almanach*, already mentioned, was established by them as their poetical organ; and the association in the course of time included the names of many distinguished authors, such as the Stolbergs, Schlegels, and Bürger. The earlier members met every Saturday 'at each other's houses, and there read and criticised their own productions and those of men of more established fame. At times they would assemble in some romantic spot "under the shade of lofty oaks, in the glimmering moonlight, by the side

of murmuring streams or in grassy meads," and there give full vent to that passionate and somewhat exaggerated love of romance and nature which form the principal characteristics of their poetry. On one occasion they went out to a neighbouring village. 'The weather was most lovely,' says Voss; 'the moon full; we gave ourselves up completely to the enjoyments of nature, drank some milk in a peasant's cottage, and then hastened to the open meadows. Here we found a little oak-wood, and at the same moment it occurred to us all to swear the holy oath of friendship, under the shadow of these sacred trees. We crowned our hats with ivy, laid them beneath the spreading branches of the oaks, and clasping each other's hands, danced round the massive trunk. We called on the moon and stars to witness our union, and swore eternal friendship. We pledged ourselves to repeat this ceremony in a still more solemn manner on the first occasion. I was chosen by lot as the head of the Bund.'

Among the compensations of that tribe whose badge is poverty, we find love the most remarkable. Elsewhere, love is usually an episode: here, it is an important part of the history, its golden threads interwoven throughout the whole web. We have seen literary men introduced by their works alone to such offices as they were supposed to be capable of filling with advantage; but the same works gave them entrance—sometimes personally unseen and unknown—into the hearts of women. Klopstock affords an example of this. A friend one day read to him from a letter some criticisms on the *Messiah*, which struck the gratified poet by their depth of thought and poetical feeling. He learned that the critic was a maiden; and although at the moment smarting under a love disappointment, called on her with a letter of introduction. 'Margaretha Moller was one of the most enthusiastic of Klopstock's admirers. Ardent and imaginative, endowed with talents of no common order, with a heart as warm as her intellect was cultivated, the author of the *Messiah* was in her eyes the ideal of all that was great and good in human nature. To see him, to know him, seemed to her a privilege which would gratify her utmost wishes, but which she could scarcely ever hope to enjoy. Her delight and astonishment may be conceived when she actually heard his name announced. Meta was at that moment engaged in some domestic occupation—no other, we believe, than that of sorting out the household linen—and the room was consequently in no little disorder. Her sister proposed declining the visit for that morning; but the fair enthusiast would not hear of such a suggestion. The linen was quickly concealed, and Klopstock introduced.' In this first interview, at which he found the young lady 'at once so gifted, so amiable, and so charming, that he could hardly avoid giving her the name dearest to him in the world,' a correspondence was agreed upon. He found that she wrote as naturally as she spoke, and that, besides French, she was well acquainted with English, Italian, Latin, and—adds Klopstock—'perhaps Greek, for aught I know.'

Meta never thought of concealing her love—a love which marriage had only the effect of increasing. "Since Klopstock and I have met," writes she to her correspondent Gleim, "I firmly believe that all those who are formed for each other are sure to meet sooner or later. How could I ever dream, when I knew Klopstock only by his *Messiah* and his odes, and so fondly wished for a heart like his, that very heart would one day be mine? . . . Even in my thirteenth year, I thought seriously how I should arrange my life, whether I married or remained single. In the first case, I settled how I should manage my household, educate my children, and above all,

conduct myself towards my husband. I formed the *beau idéal* of the consort I should desire, and Providence has given me precisely him whom I had pictured to myself as the type, the model of human perfection." . . . "I must tell you a new happiness," she writes to another, "which increases the number of my calm enjoyments. Klopstock, who had hitherto written out his compositions himself, begins to dictate them to me! This is indeed a delight! Klopstock's first manuscript is always written by my hand, and thus I am the first to read his beautiful verses! Rejoice in the advent of the second volume of the *Messiah*. Abbadona appears more frequently in the ninth song. Do I love Klopstock particularly as the author of the *Messiah*? Ah, for how many causes do I particularly love him! But on this account more than any other. And what a love is this! How pure, how tender, how full of veneration! I am most anxious he should finish the *Messiah*, not so much on account of the honour which will redound to him in consequence, as of the benefit it will confer on mankind. He never works at it without my praying that God may bless his labours. My Klopstock always writes with tears in his eyes!"

The irritable and melancholy Lessing obtained a wife whose admirable qualities acted like heavenly balm upon the spirit of every one who came near her. 'The spell which Madame Lessing threw over those around her could not fail to exercise a potent influence on a mind like that of her husband's, so keenly alive to all that was good and noble. His irritability decreased; his whole nature seemed tranquillised and softened, and the very spirit of love and concord reigned over the little household.' Wieland's first love was unfortunate, although he was beloved in return. His second was so also; and we mention it because the description of the lady shews, what one is inclined to suspect throughout, that the attachment of the German literary heart is determined by qualities different from physical beauty. 'A greater contrast to Sophia could scarcely be conceived. Julia was plain even to ugliness; somewhat pedantic withal, fond of talking with a loud voice and dictatorial manner, not unlike the picture drawn of the gifted and unfortunate Margaret Fuller. Like her, too, she contrived to make all these imperfections forgotten by her intellectual charms, and exercised on every one who came within her sphere an influence absolutely magical. "There is nothing in the world I would not do—nothing that ought to be done, I mean," Wieland writes to Zimmermann, "to win the hand of Julia; but I fear this is impossible." So it proved. Julia was resolved to live and die in single blessedness, and, strange to say, fulfilled her resolution.' Notwithstanding later attachments, however, his early love was never forgotten. At the ripe age of fifty-five, he once more met Sophia. 'Wieland had inquired after her with some impatience, and seemed most anxious to see her. All at once he perceived her. I saw him tremble; he stepped aside, threw his hat down with a movement at once hasty and tremulous, and hastened towards her. Sophia approached him with extended arms; but instead of accepting her embrace, he seized her hand, and stooped down to conceal his features. Sophia, with a heavenly look, bent over him, and said, in a tone which neither clarion nor hautboys could imitate: "Wieland, Wieland! Yes, it is you—you are ever my dear good Wieland!" Roused by this touching voice, Wieland lifted up his head, looked in the weeping eyes of the friend of his youth, and let his face sink into her arms.'

But the loves of the poets is too extensive a theme for our space, and we shall conclude by citing the case of Bürger after the death of his second wife, to whom he was even madly attached. 'Bürger's poems were peculiar favourites among the fair sex, and one of their

warmest admirers was a Suabian maiden, called Elisa H—. Young, ardent, and romantic to excess, she had hung with rapture over Bürger's poems; she had listened with pitying sympathy to the recital of his love and his sorrows, and her imagination had pictured him under the most attractive form. Wayward and passionate, thoughtless and unreflective, now glad some as a child, now plunged into the depths of sadness—"everything by turns, and nothing long"—Elisa was the most charming and the most provoking of her sex. Though far from wealthy, her position was at least independent, and her wit and beauty attracted numerous admirers. As none of her adorers had yet found favour in her eyes, probably because they fell short of the standard of excellence her imagination had formed, she was still unmarried and fancy-free, when the tidings of Molly's [the wife's] death reached her, and awakened feelings which at first she herself scarcely dared to analyse. Bürger, he whose poems had been so long the delight of her heart, now thrilling her with terror, now moving her to tears, was free! That being whom he had so passionately loved was torn from him by the cruel hand of death; and, as Elisa pictured his wild despair, his hopeless anguish, his utter loneliness, her enthusiastic soul warmed with mingled tenderness and pity. To see him, to know him, to console him, this was at first the sole end and aim of all her wishes. Gradually others arose—might she not by her love and care reconcile him to that world which was now become a desert to him, and replace his lost Molly in his heart? She did not pause to consider whether a union with a man double her age, who had already twice entered the bonds of matrimony, would be likely to insure her happiness. She trusted to her charms, to her influence, to efface all remembrance of his beloved Molly, and to mould him to her wishes—a delusion which has blasted the peace of many a fond heart.

Among the names mentioned by our author are not those of Goethe or Schiller, or of the writers who have flourished in our own generation; but these will form the subject of a future work. In the meantime, we have thought that it might not be considered an uninteresting or unsuggestive service to deduce from the present volumes some slight account of the compensations of literary life in Germany.

THE SATURDAY HALF-HOLIDAY AND FRIDAY PAYMENTS.

A MEMORIAL from the Early-closing Association has been laid before the governor and directors of the Bank of England, with a request that they would sanction the movement by closing the Bank at two o'clock on Saturdays, and thereby 'confer an important privilege on those engaged in that establishment, facilitate the adoption of the practice in the London banks generally, and at the same time give a powerful impetus to the cause in other quarters.'

Upwards of eleven hundred of the leading city firms have given their hearty concurrence to this proposition, 'believing that no inconvenience can arise to the public from such alteration being immediately effected,' and their names are affixed to the memorial. It sets forth that this generous concession will not only 'enable many thousands of the mercantile and industrial classes, with their families—without infringing on the Sunday—to participate in those interchanges of friendship, and to take that healthful relaxation, which constitute some of the chief enjoyments, and even necessities of life;' but also that an indirect result of great importance will arise from it, in the more general payment of wages on the Friday instead of the Saturday.

It is almost impossible to over-estimate the advantages of such a change. 'When a working instead of a leisure day,' says a committee of the House of Commons, appointed to consider this subject, 'succeeds the receipt of wages, the workman encounters fewer temptations to dissipate his earnings at the gin-shop, instead of employing them in the purchase of necessities for his family. If gentlemen-manufacturers, master-tradesmen, and farmers were aware of the benefits which must result to the labouring-class from paying their wages on an earlier day than Saturday, especially if that day precede a market-day, your committee entertain no doubt that feelings of kindness, as well as duty, would soon cause the practice to become general.'

And again: 'If the labourer does not receive his wages in proper time on the Saturday to allow him Sunday as a day of rest or recreation, he is manifestly injured by being deprived of that portion of time which it has been the design of laws, both human and divine, to secure to him. If, on the other hand, he receives his wages in time to enable him to make his purchases on the Saturday evening, he is committing an injustice on the shopkeeper by causing him to sacrifice his day of rest by delaying his purchases to the Sunday.'

Nevertheless, we must remember that the absolute and universal stoppage of Sunday trading is impossible so long as the poor are so infamously lodged as they are at present. When seven or eight persons occupy the same room, eating and sleeping, the presence, in addition, of a leg of mutton hanging from the ceiling—which is their only 'safe'—is far from wholesome on the Saturday night, nor is the morsel itself rendered more savoury by the process for the ensuing day; but with respect to commodities which are not perishable, they need never be bought upon the Sunday by persons who receive their wages before the preceding evening. All the weekly labourers in the Queen's employment are paid on Friday, and all those in the government establishments either on that day or before Saturday afternoon; while the same is the case with the Metropolitan and City police forces. Moreover, all the Friday-paying firms agree that their men do not keep worse time, and are not less fitted for their duties on Saturday by reason of the change.

The Association, as might have been expected, have indeed been far more successful in effecting this alteration of pay-day than in procuring a diminution of the hours of toil. It is hard to persuade the commercial mind that a few hours *given* is not a few hours *lost*, nor does it quite see the necessity of 'refreshing the machine' at all—in the case of other people.

Still, there is a very large minority of liberal-minded merchants, manufacturers, and traders, who have sympathised with the early-closing movement, and adopted more or less entirely the Saturday half-holiday, including the Stock Exchange; Lloyd's; the Baltic Coffee-house; a large majority of the insurance companies; the General Post-office in some departments; the railway companies in certain divisions; the distillers; many of the brewers; the hop-factors; the leather-factors; several of the great printers; the wholesale fruiterers; the wholesale stationers; the wholesale booksellers; numerous merchants and brokers; with all the great warehousemen to the north and south of Cheapside, engaged in the Manchester, Bradford, Leeds, Coventry, Leicester, Nottingham, and Scotch trades. While, as an example of the progress of the cause, 'her Majesty's judges, and subsequently the lord chancellor, have established new rules touching the service of pleadings, notices, summonses, &c., to facilitate the carrying out of the movement in the legal profession; and,

readily availing themselves of these new rules, upwards of seven hundred of the leading London solicitors now close their offices on Saturday at two o'clock.

The bankers, in some of the principal cities in the north of England, including Liverpool and Manchester, as also in Scotland, have for some years past carried out the half-holiday movement.

The testimonies of many of the more important firms who have long adopted Early Closing, are very gratifying. It in reality appears that, 'whilst they have thus conferred an important boon on those in their employ, for which the latter are most grateful, they generally get as much work done in the shorter time as they formerly did in the more lengthened hours of business. Happily for the cause, this is no mere theory, which may or may not be correct, but the actual experience of business-men whose names stamp their statements with truth, and who, moreover, could have no motive to mislead the public in the matter. This pleasing result is, no doubt, partly owing to the greater heart, and more thorough concentration of purpose with which workmen naturally apply themselves to their calling when cheered by the prospect of a few hours of extra relaxation at the end of the week; and partly to the augmented restorative influence exercised by that prolonged cessation from toil.'

The employers sometimes require an extra half-hour *per diem*, in order to make up for the Saturday half-holiday, and their labourers are very ready to give it. Without this exaction, however, such a firm as Barclay and Perkins are able to assert that 'they have closed business entirely on Saturday, at two o'clock, for the last eighteen months, and the plan has occasioned no inconvenience or obstacle to the due execution of our regular work; on the contrary, it has resulted in greater convenience to all concerned.'

Chubb and Son 'have closed at 1 p.m. on Saturday, for the last eighteen months, and find the system answers very satisfactorily in both their manufactories (London and Wolverhampton).'

Alexander Grant and Brothers, who close at two o'clock on Saturday, declare that it 'has been very beneficial to ourselves, as well as to our people for whose advantage it was adopted. *We get quite as much, if not more, work done, and a better class of men offer themselves for employment.'*

The Patent Galvanising and Corrugating Iron Company has closed at two in the summer months, and four in the winter, and the proprietors 'have found no inconvenience whatever in their arrangement, but quite the reverse, as their men have done precisely as much work since shortening the hours of labour.'

The firm of Truman, Hanbury, Buxton, and Co., whose men leave work so early as at half-past twelve, assert this: 'Three years ago, we adopted the plan of giving the men in our employ a half-holiday on Saturdays. . . . *We now complete in five days and a half that which formerly occupied six days to do, and this without any inconvenience; and in the long-run we believe we are gainers rather than otherwise by so doing. Our men are decidedly improved; we get better servants, and the work is done more heartily. . . . We pay all our men at eight o'clock each Saturday morning.'*

We have no room for further quotations; but nothing can be more gratifying to those who wish well to humanity than such testimonies from practical men to the commercial benefits which ensue from putting our own fingers to lighten the heavy burdens upon the shoulders of our labouring brethren. Of the moral advantages of such alleviation from toil, no man can doubt who reads the evidence here placed before him.

The physical necessity for some such change is obvious to all who are acquainted with the business

streets of London and our manufacturing towns, and have marked the frames and faces of the passers-by. In Scotland, or rather—as we fear we must restrict ourselves to stating—in Edinburgh, there is no such conflict for the bare life; no such penning in unwholesome atmospheres the whole day long; no such ceaseless offering up of human health at the desk and counter altars, as in many other places. The hours of toil are certainly not so numerous as in English towns; and the Early Closing Movement—the Saturday Half-holiday—is, in addition, generally observed.

THE SCOTCHMAN IN IRELAND.

THE *Times* correspondent and such-like literary locusts would appear to have exhausted the Green Isle and the Irish utterly; but the author of *Ballytubber, or a Scotch Settler in Ireland*,* proves to us that there is something to be said upon the subject still. It really is a remarkable book for some reasons; and not the less that we have in it the Thistle reproaching the Shamrock with its unornamental appearance; the pot condemning the kettle upon the ground of its being black underneath; in plain terms, one who is familiar with Edinburgh Old Town and the Cowgate, giving the rough side of his tongue to the city of Belfast and the sister-land, upon the score, forsooth, of its being overcrowded and not overclean.

Mr Virgilius Penman, as the author calls himself, is certainly not inclined to be complimentary; but there is such an air of truth about what he goes on to say concerning Irish farm-letting, as proves it to be a personal experience. He is himself a Scotch settler in want of a farm. Such excellent demesnes are offered to him (upon paper) in the Irish advertisements, that he scarcely knows which to choose; all 'in most quiet and respectable localities; all 'in sporting counties; all 'in the neighbourhood of Protestant churches, good schools, and market-towns.' Some of these turn out to be such as the thriving city of Eden, in the United States, appeared, in reality, to Martin Chuzzlewit and Company; some are only 'put into the newspapers in order to meet the landlord's eye, while, all the time, they are engaged to some one at a certain rent, or intended to be retained in the agent's own hands; and some 'are advertised solely for the purpose of ascertaining from applicants their marketable value, in order to raise or fix a rent for their present tenants; whereby strangers are often induced to incur long and expensive journeys fruitlessly.'

Let it be granted, however, that the unfortunate settler gets his stock and tillage-farm at last, consisting of 300 acres, and situated in that most civilised of Irish counties, Dublin; and suppose that his horses, cattle, sheep, are all that could be wished, and that he is fortunate in his husbandmen; even with these advantages, he is not, it seems, an enviable agriculturist. His wedders are slaughtered nightly, and the skins alone left to tell the tale, while the shepherd who narrates the misfortune is himself privy to the crime; or the sheep again suffer, and this time by a reverse of the felony, their wool being taken and their bodies left torn and bruised, and perished with the cold; or the manes and tails of the plough-horses are found shorn to the skin, and even the tails of the milch-cows laid under contribution.

The settler's most difficult task, however, seems to be the management of some twenty farm-labourers: five of whom, being men, are appointed to the horses;

* Houlston and Wright. London. 1858.

and 'fifteen women, ten of whom without shoes or stockings, in short, with one-third of their fair superficies in *puris naturalibus*—their heads, in most instances, uncovered—their vestments consist chiefly of the cast-off attire of both sexes, tucked together by pins and threads, and their hair smeared into cakes by *ham-grease*, and folded up under a ribbon; others have it hanging in slattern folds about their ears, or twisted like snakes around their temples.' At six o'clock A. M., the work of these farm-labourers is (supposed) to begin; and at the same hour, allowing an interval of two hours from eleven to one, they (very readily) retire. The wages for women are 8d. per diem; and for men, from 16d. to 18d. Let the unfortunate farmer relate his own experience of day the first:

'*Day the First.*—With the sound of the morning-bell, precisely at the hour of six, our illustrious husbandman enters the field. One only of his ploughmen is up to time; one has forgotten his hame-sticks, and has left his horses grazing by the way until he "just go fetch them;" another has let slip out of his hand one of his spirited mares, and is pursuing her about the farm; the fourth has slept in "because his wife was sick;" and the fifth has gone to the forge, having neglected to go on the preceding evening. . . . Of the number of females engaged, two only are forward at the hour appointed, and these are a soldier's widow and daughter. About an hour hence, a noisy band, singing and frolicking on their way, is seen advancing on the field; and at every hour or half-hour from this till past noon are stragglers coming in. The morning, it is true, has afforded a sorry start; but patience is a virtue, and hopes are entertained of a full muster for the afternoon. At the hour of one the roll is called. Twelve tell up; for though the complement has now appeared on the ground, three of the number are missing—gone off to meet their little boy or little girl, their brother or sister, who was to fetch their "bit o' bread and sup o' tay."

Day the second is not much better, and day the third is worse; so that, if we are to believe the author of *Ballytubber*, the Scotch emigrant in search of a farm, who is not gifted with the patience of Job and the purse of Fortunatus, had better go further afield than into the sister-island. Nevertheless, as Mr Penman does stay in the place after all, one may conclude that things get better in time. Here is a description of one of the best contrivances, perhaps, for making them better that has yet been hit upon by those interested in Ireland's welfare—namely, the Court of Encumbered Estates. Its importance causes us—in true Irish fashion—to end our notice of Mr Penman's experiences with an account of that institution, without which they would never have begun. The court is held in Henrietta Street, and the auction generally commences about noon.

'You approach from this street through a goodly dwelling-house, now converted into offices in connection with the business of the court; thence by a long and narrow passage in the rear of this building to the court-room itself. On entering the disenchanting hall, you will naturally uncover, unmindful of the counter-example of some gentlemen you will see there—they are up from the wild countries where a new hat is a novelty, and Baron R—is a man of feeling. Taking your stand or seat as accommodation will afford, and running your eyes over the interior of the chamber, you will see a vast number of men seated on the different rows of benches; some with sharp, lively, trickish looks; others with sad and sorrowful countenances; and some, again, complacently watching at their ease the progress of the business. These three divisions of the company are the lawyers, nominal owners, and intended purchasers; and each order may readily be distinguished

by the various expressions and emotions impressed upon their features. Some, you will perceive, are following the biddings with a nervous and visible anxiety; others engaged in the perusal of and pencilling on the margin of Rentals; whilst a third order are making notes, and conning over legal documents. The scene, viewed apart from its merits, has something grave and impressive in moral effect; relating perhaps, as it may, to some once noble patrimony, some once hospitable but now deserted habitation, where festivity and mirth seemed to promise endurance with the rising and setting sun, about to depart for ever from one whose name has been identified with the soil, whose lease or manorial tenure, once counted by centuries, is now within a few minutes of its eventful end—the glory of an illustrious ancestry about to be for ever severed from the territory which some noble founder had "called after his own name!"'

THE FIRST DAY OF JUNE.

SWEET June, I greet thee on thy birthday morn
With song and gladness; now my heart grows young,
As many blisses on its chords are strung
As bright-eyed flowers thy new-wave robe adorn.
Hail to thy coming o'er yon eastern hills,
Treading on gorgeous clouds whose humid locks
Are steeped in heaven's own purple; the high rocks
Gleam on thy path like gold; thy glory fills
Mountain and vale, the meadows and their streams;
The sweet birds in the forest are awake,
And of a new-born joy like mine partake—
The whole earth of its primal Sabbath dreams,
While fragrant airs in wooing whispers come
Kissing the opening flowers to brighter bloom.

J. D.

A MAINE LAW THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

When whisky was first introduced into Scotland, it appears to have been used only as a medicine, and to have been kept strictly under the lock and key of the medical practitioners, as it now is within those American towns where the Maine Law is rigorously enforced, backed by the sympathy and support of the people. A portion of the medical practitioners of Edinburgh—now the Royal College of Surgeons—in 1505 united in their own persons the rather incongruous duties of surgeons and barbers, and, in that capacity, applied to the town-council, in accordance with the customs of the age, to be formed into a separate incorporation. The town-council granted the prayer of 'their bill and supplication,' by issuing the 'seill of cause, granted be the towne-counsell of Edinburgh, to the craftis of Surgerie and Barbouris,' dated July 1, 1505. In the spirit of the times, this document—amongst other exclusive privileges conferred on the newly incorporated body—provided and declared 'that na persoun, man nor woman, within this burgh, *mak nor sell ony aquavite* within the samyn, except the saidis maisteris, brether and freemen of the craftis, under paine of the escheit of the samyn, but [without] favours.' This charter was ratified and confirmed by an act of the parliament of Scotland, passed in the reign of Charles I., November 17, 1641. The whisky-bottle had thus been in the exclusive keeping of the medical profession for nearly a century and a half, and, by this act, it appeared to be irrecoverably placed in their hands.—*Rise and Progress of Whisky Drinking in Scotland*, by D. Maclaren. Edinburgh: Oliphant.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by WILLIAM ROBERTSON, 25 Upper Sackville Street, DUBLIN, and all Booksellers.